

Iowa Joint Operator Certification and Training Coordination Committee

Friday, July 21, 2006 – IAMU Office, Ankeny, Iowa

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jon Martens at 10:05 a.m.

Present were:

• Dale Acheson, IAWWA	• Steve Mrstik, KCC
• Jane Enfield, IDNR	• Harris Seidel, IWPCA
• Marty Hoffert, IAWWA	• Laurie Sharp, IDNR
• Steve Hopkins, IDNR	• Jill Soenen, IAMU
• Marty Kunkel, IAMU	• Jim Stricker, IWPCA
• Jon Martens, IAWWA	• Jim Utter, IWPCA
• Jim McElvogue, IWPCA	• Mike Wildung, IRWA

Visitors: Steve Moehlmann, ACEOPS

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Marty Hoffert, seconded by Jim Stricker, to adopt the agenda as distributed by e-mail a week earlier. Motion carried.

[NOTE: An agenda can be obtained from any Joint Committee member within the three days preceding a meeting of the Joint Committee.]

3. Approval of May 19, 2006 Minutes

Moved by Jim Utter, seconded by Marty Kunkel, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment

Steve Moehlmann expressed thanks to Laurie Sharp for providing him with information on the agenda items.

5. Unfinished Business/Assignments

a. Draft Form for Questions and Comments to the Joint Committee

Rhonda Guy was unable to attend.

b. NTK Sub-committee Progress Report

Laurie Sharp reported that, although good progress is being made, this project is taking much more time than anticipated.

c. Status of McElvogue-Hoffert Amendment for Grade IV Certification

This amendment states that:

"Two years of direct responsible charge experience in a Grade III or higher position may be substituted for one year of directly related post-high school education for Grade IV certification up to three-fourths of the post-high school education requirement."

This amendment has been included without a single word changed in a rules package drafted by Diane Moles. Scheduled steps in the rule-making process are as follows:

- 8/06: Advisory group meeting
- 9/06: Submit to EPC as an Information Item (draft rules)

- 10/06: Submit to EPC as a Decision Item (proposed rules)
- 10/06: Notice of Intended Action published in *Iowa Administrative Bulletin*
- 11/06: Hold public hearing and public comment period
- 12/06: Submit to EPC as a Decision Item (final rules)
- 1/07: Adopted and filed published in *Iowa Administrative Bulletin*

Just as a reminder, an operator with only a high school education but plenty of experience can now substitute two years of that experience for two years of PHS education but still needs 90 CEUs of training for Grade IV certification.

Under the McElvogue-Hoffert amendment, the operator could substitute two more years of DRC experience for one more year of PHS education, reducing training needs to 45 CEUs.

d. Draft Addition to Strategic Plan Update

During discussion of the Update, the following changes were requested.

- Executive Summary, page U-ii, second line from bottom—replace "political masters" with "governing body"
- SI X, page U-12, third line from bottom—replace "political masters" with "governing body"
- SI X, page U-12, first word of Objective A—replace "Arm" with "Equip"

With these changes, approval of the Strategic Plan Update was moved by Marty Hoffert; seconded by Jim Stricker; motion carried.

e. Committee Appointments

There is a need to identify committee members and begin work on several Strategic Issues.

- SI II – Operation by Affidavit. Jon Martens volunteered to chair this committee. Jim McElvogue will also serve on it. Laurie has names of others willing to serve, including several affidavit operators.
- SI IV – Training Scope and Delivery. Objective A: Relevant Training for Grade A Operators. Laurie will ask Brad Robbins to chair this committee since he is now teaching Grade A courses. Tim Robbins was also suggested.
- SI VII – Facilities Classification. Jim Stricker and Jim Utter volunteered to co-chair this committee. Others from both water and wastewater will be needed. Laurie pointed out that decisions on basic w/ww classifications were needed before work could begin on classification of other areas such as on-site, pretreatment, and industrial facilities.

6. New Business

None.

7. Representative Comments

a. IDNR

Steve Hopkins passed around a copy of the FY 2006 IDNR Drinking Water Program report prepared by Diane Moles. This report is also posted on the web.

A contractor begins work July 24 on developing an interactive Operator Certification Web Page. Completion is expected sometime in September. Operators and others will be able to look up information

on employment, facilities, certification, CEUs, etc. The site will also provide information on affidavit operators and may have a small employment bulletin board.

A question was raised on the status of SI III of the Strategic Plan Update dealing with water distribution (WD) certification. Under current rules, an operator certified in both WT and WD receives a PWS certificate valid for both certifications. "For purposes of renewal, all renewal fees and CEU requirements shall be applied as one certification." Therefore, a Grade I or II operator now needs only 1 CEU every two years to renew in both classifications.

For reference, the Executive Summary section dealing with SI III, Water Distribution, is presented here.

Water Distribution. The major thrust of the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) re-authorization was to recognize that the distribution system is just as important as the treatment plant in actually delivering safe drinking water to consumers. Experienced field staff report that water quality incidents are more often the result of problems in the distribution system than in treatment. The resulting EPA guidelines required that operator certification for water distribution be elevated to a level equal with that for water treatment.

Iowa has not yet done this.

The 2001 Ch. 81 rules changes provided for issuance of hybrid PWS certificates covering both treatment and distribution. One result was that renewal of distribution certification requires only token training and no fee. Another result was that treatment certification was downgraded by requiring less training for renewal than before—a definite step backward. Iowa must

- establish distribution and treatment as fully separate but equal certifications, and
- raise training and renewal requirements for both to the same level in effect for all classifications prior to 2001.

IDNR staff responded that they have heard no support for this proposal, and they cannot carry this forward without support. The prevailing attitude at present is negative. All agree that water distribution is important, but utility managers resist the additional time off the job and associated cost. Some also argue that there is not enough good WD training available anyway, and their employees find themselves repeating the same training.

It was suggested that these minutes state that the Joint Committee

- is investigating the issues and alternatives involved with WD training and certification and
- is urgently seeking input from those in the field.

b. IAMU

Jill Soenen announced a new series of Water Disinfection workshops as follows:

Ankeny – September 6	Storm Lake – September 15
Atlantic – September 8	Independence – September 21
Mason City – September 14	Coralville – September 22

Also Water Leak Detection and Water Distribution training workshops will be held on the IAMU campus on September 27 and 28, respectively.

c. IAWWA

Marty Hoffert announced that the Region 2 meeting will be held on October 5.

d. IRWA

Mike Wildung was downhearted and understandably so. The Rural Water Picnic was today; and, apparently, IRWA neglected to invite him.

e. ISU

No representative present.

f. IWPCA

Jim Utter noted that a Lagoon training workshop will be held in Pleasantville on August 15. Actually, this is an IRWA training event with Jim Stricker as the instructor.

g. KCC

Steve Mrstik reported that Kirkwood's Golf and Wastewater Extravaganza is scheduled for August 21 and 22 in Cedar Rapids this year.

8. Assignments

Rhonda Guy – Press release

Staff – Progress report on the McElvogue-Hoffert amendment

Staff – Progress report on the Strategic Plan Update committees

All – Bring some suggestions on WD certification (SI III)

9. Next Meeting

Friday, September 15, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the IAMU office in Ankeny.

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Steve Mrstik; seconded by Jim McElvogue; motion carried. The Joint Committee adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Harris F. Seidel, Secretary